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THE AWAKENING OF INDIA.

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THE volcanic conditions prevalent in British India have something more than an academic interest for American citizens. The great Republic has long outgrown doctrines which would restrict her energies to the New World. She has wrested the last relics of colonial empire from Spain, and assumed the responsibility of governing 7,000,000 Asiatics. At no distant date she may be forced into a struggle for supremacy in the Pacific with one or more Asiatic Powers. In the realm of economics, the solidarity of mankind has been well-nigh accomplished; and every pulsation of that mighty heart is felt from Maine to Mexico. No patriotic American can ignore the awakening of the East.

The first lesson taught by events of this twentieth century is that we are face to face with world-forces. Asia is the cradle of our religion and civilization, and both were evolved in the alluvial valleys of the Nile, Euphrates, Indus and Ganges, in the course of that "eternal conflict between East and West which dyed blood-red the waters of Salamis and brought Zenobia a prisoner to Rome." There is some reason to believe that the process operates in æons of 500 years; each swing of the vast pendulum being attended by drastic changes in religion, social institutions and international politics. No student can survey the landmarks of history from 500 B.C., without arriving at a conviction that the Demi-millennial Theory rests on a solid substratum of fact. It was enunciated thirty-five years ago by Mr. Stuart Glennie, who holds that a new era has dawned with the defeat of Russia by Japan. These forces have generated the unrest that marks our age, when ancient idols are tottering to their fall, and deeply rooted canons of thought and action are called in question. To withstand world-forces is impossible. It

is the politician's function to forecast their operation, in order that the vital portions of existing institutions may emerge unharmed from their impact. *C'est contre le lendemain que mon esprit lutte*, said Prince Metternich to an American traveller, proving thereby that he had grasped one of the attributes of statesmanship. Progress is not attained by cataclysmic upheaval, but by the gradual modification of organs to suit a new environment.

Synthesis is an inherent property of human nature, and we may regard national consolidation as brought about by a series of ferments infusing new life into a chaotic mass. History marks the progress of change from fluidity and incoherence to consolidation and unity. The Superman seems essential to the making of the people. At every period of the world's history we find lawgivers, teachers, organizers and leaders, who tower high above their fellow men and guide them to a higher sphere in the leading-strings of fear or love. The welding agencies are some degree of uniformity in religion or morals, intermarriage, industrial co-operation and a democratic government. Thus is formed a multicellular organism, linked together by a living tissue of law, tradition, custom and history; furnished with organs for self-preservation and extending its environment; gifted, too, with a soul which reflects the ideal of the average human unit. It does not escape the laws of evolution which govern the material world. The stages of national growth are well defined. The first is one of mutual defence. Feudalism is usually associated with the break-up of the Roman Empire, but an almost identical system was evolved in India, Japan, Mexico and Peru.

It is based on the appropriation of land by a limited class, which is vested with privilege and saddled with corresponding duties. Thus an aristocracy of birth takes shape, which uses its legislative power for selfish ends, and becomes an oligarchy whose bond of union is mutual interest and caste-feeling. When feudalism has served its ends, the nation enters on an industrial era. This implies the concentration of labor in urban centres, whose wealth enables the *bourgeoisie* to wrest political power from the privileged classes.

But evolution is inexorable. The new ruling class succumbs in its turn to a democracy, whose spirit is thus admirably stated by Mr. Owen Wister:

"It was through the Declaration of Independence that we American acknowledged the eternal inequality of man. For by it we abolished a cut-and-dried aristocracy. We had seen little men held up in high places and great men artificially held down in low places; and our own justice-loving hearts abhorred the violence to human nature. Therefore we decreed that every man should have equal liberty to find his own level. By this very decree we acknowledged and gave freedom to aristocracy, saying—'Let the best man win, whoever he is!'"

This stage is fraught with danger to the life of the social organism. If commercialism enter its soul, the higher faculties are doomed to atrophy; the burden of national defence is shifted to mercenaries; the current of national life is narrowed by feudal survivals and choked by gross materialism. The dying community becomes a prey to parasitic growths, or is absorbed by a more virile neighbor.

Taine has remarked that the growth of moral sense is characteristic of a decadent community. In point of fact, a moral stage should succeed one in which a people's energies are concentrated on production and material enjoyment. The national conscience awakes to the evils of unrestricted competition, and realizes the fact that the Government exists not to promote the accumulation of wealth, but the diffusion of happiness. Hitherto, this renaissance has come too late to prevent disintegration. In the world-wide arena of international struggle progress is stimulated by racial antipathies. Deep-seated is the hostility between Aryan and Semite, between white and yellow races. Cooperation is, indeed, a higher evolutionary process than the Struggle for Life, but ages must pass by ere it extend to the relations between communities. Each blindly obeys the promptings of the wish to live at its neighbors' expense. The hiving instinct, or earth-hunger, impels a vigorous nation to extend its borders by means of warfare, commercial enterprise or colonization. But when a civilized government comes into contact with others less advanced, its conquests must continue until they reach the sea, an impassable mountain barrier, or the frontiers of another State strong enough to be mistress at home. Such is the genesis of all empires, past and present. Their permanence is in a direct ratio with their power of assimilation. No Government, however enlightened, suffices to weld a community together in lasting bonds. As I have remarked above, the necessary factors in nation-building are some uniformity in the standard of religion or

morals, miscegenation and democratic rule. In the absence of these essentials, the victor's iron grasp must, sooner or later, relax; and his distant possession is left to a far worse fate than if it had never tasted of the cup of civilization.

Applying these canons of evolution to India, we perceive the tremendous perplexity of the problems with which Great Britain is confronted. The peninsula is a triangle of 1,500,000 square miles in area. Its base, resting on Asia, is protected by the impenetrable Himalayan range. Only on the northwest is India vulnerable by passes in the Suleiman Mountains. Its sides are washed by the sea, and have but few good harbors. Thus, India has the advantages and defects of an insular position, which favors the growth of national life, while it intercepts currents of energy from without. In prehistoric times the central plateau was an island; but it had been connected with the mainland by detritus washed from the Himalayas by a group of mighty rivers. The alluvial plains of India afford a key to her civilization and history. The valleys of the Indus, Ganges, Brahmaputra, and their network of tributaries, yearly fertilized by silt, are fit breeding-grounds for the human race. The climate is tropical, but the northern provinces have extremes of hot and cold. It is enervating to muscular power, while it stimulates the sexual instinct. Before the dawn of history, India was the habitat of aboriginal tribes, who lived by fishing and the chase. About 1500 B.C., if not much earlier, waves of foreign invasion began to pour in from the northwest. The newcomers' kinship with ourselves was proved by their lofty brow, clearly cut features and fair complexions. They had reached a high degree of civilization, were well organized for war, and brought with them the Sanskrit language—perhaps the most complex and perfect of all vehicles for exchanging thought. Their religion was the worship of Nature-powers; and the antisocial caste-instinct had not yet developed. These Aryans drove the aboriginal tribesmen to the mountains and forests, or reduced them to slavery. On settling down in the alluvial valleys, their warlike spirit relaxed, and their skins darkened. The synthetic tendency produced caste distinctions. Priests, warriors, professional men and traders formed communities apart, and intermarriage became impossible. Thus the chief factor in nation-building was absent. With specialization came greater complexity in religion. It developed an ethical

side, and blindly sought the Intelligence which stands behind elemental powers. In this view, the world is an arena for the activities of creating, sustaining and destroying influences. The human soul seeks absorption in Divinity; but its impurities cannot be purged away in the course of one transient life. Thus arose the doctrine of Metempsychosis, which enunciates the transmigration of souls during ages of purifying trial. Asceticism was a necessary consequence, and the keen-witted priesthood developed a marvellous system of philosophy. The ignorant masses were held in thrall by legends celebrating the exploits of demigods—incarnations of the Sustaining Influence.

In the sixth century B.C. Hinduism underwent a transient reformation. Gautama, known to his followers as Buddha—"The Intelligence"—headed a reaction against Brahmin arrogance, and the materialism attending prosperity. He rejected caste, and the elaborate ceremonial which was the backbone of priestcraft, but retained the conception of Metempsychosis. Buddha anticipated Schopenhauer in believing that existence is a curse, and annihilation a blessing. The latter could be effected only when a balance had been struck between the good and evil actions of the soul after undergoing countless transmigrations. The charity of Buddhism knows no bounds, but its spirit is distinctly individualistic. It preaches resignation, passive contemplation and abstraction from mundane affairs. Such a creed was incompatible with the struggle for life; and after enduring for eleven hundred years it provoked another reaction. In the sixth century of our era, Hinduism in a degraded form was restored. Brahmins regained ascendancy, and strengthened their position by multiplying ceremonial observances. Religious ideals degenerated. No longer was the Creative Influence adored. Its place was usurped by a Sustaining Factor in its generative aspect. This cult soon assumed a highly sensuous form, and brought about the subjection of women. The Goddess of Destruction was placated by cruel rites. Heroes, regarded as incarnations of the Gods above; symbols of material wealth, such as a Cow and the River Ganges, found millions of suppliants. The theory of government was a pure theocracy; the warrior caste a secular arm, ever ready to do the Brahmins' bidding. The lower castes spread out into countless ramifications, resembling mediæval guilds, linked by religion, but kept apart by marriage customs. Caste stereo-

types a man's position at his birth, and is fatal to social cohesion. Another disintegrating element was the crystallization of society into minute particles. In course of centuries, the Indian plains were overspread by villages, each a complete self-governing unit, like so many infantry battalions. A congeries of States resting on such foundations is powerless against foreign aggression.

In 1001 A.D. came the first of many waves of Moslem invasion. Arabia, inhabited by a fierce, high-souled and contemplative race, was the cradle of Islam. The bane of religion is mysticism, which seeks the Creator but ignores the world, and fanaticism, which is mysticism translated into action. The Arab character was a forcing-ground for these qualities. Islam is a monotheism of the higher type. Its cardinal doctrines are resignation to God's will, the duties of prayer, penance and pilgrimage, the brotherhood of believers, and missionary effort attended by the sword. Inspired by fatalism and the memory of a great name, the Khalifs' followers subdued western Asia, and invaded Europe. But for the crushing defeat which they received from a Christian coalition at Tours (732 A.D), the West would now acknowledge that "there is no God save Allah and Mohammed is His Prophet." The princes of India could not withstand such forces. One by one they succumbed; and the sixteenth century saw an Islamic Empire installed at Delhi. The Mogul rulers were essentially nomads. They encamped in the peninsula, and their reigns were spent in moving from one extremity to the other with a locustlike horde of followers. Such education as they tolerated was purely Moslem; and the current of national life was scarcely affected. At one moment it seemed as though India had found the Superman who would lead her in the path of progress. The Emperor Akbar (1560-1605) had boundless sympathy associated with high culture, and a truly enlightened spirit. He took counsel of the best elements in Hindu society, and his system of Government has left indelible traces on Indian polity. His descendant Aurangzib (1658-1707) was a bigot born in the purple; and his long reign was an era of persecution terminating in civil war. At his death, the Empire, knit together by Akbar's statecraft, fell to pieces. Provincial satraps threw off their allegiance to the puppet Emperor of Delhi, and kingdoms arose with mushroom rapidity.

Meantime, European society had traversed the feudal stage,

and entered one of industry (1500-1900). The transformation of energy was brought about by a variety of causes. Printing multiplied the power of intellect a thousandfold. The grandeur and impeccable beauty of classical literature came as a revelation to the human mind. Renaissance in art and literature inspired revolt against the absolutism and dogma of Rome. The hiving instinct grew stronger, and it prompted maritime nations to seek new worlds beyond the sea. The discovery of America synchronized with that of the Cape route to India. Portuguese, English and Dutch mariners competed for a share in the rich Eastern commerce, and established factories on the Indian coast. At first, they came as timid suppliants; but they grew bolder in the anarchy of Mogul decadence. The instinct of self-preservation compelled them to maintain armies, and form alliances with native Powers. In the race for wealth, British merchants distanced all competitors. An insular position had given their country sea-power and comparatively free institutions; and they received heart-whole support from home. France was the last to succumb. During the first half of the eighteenth century she was a great colonizing Power; but the utter rottenness of the government of Louis XV destroyed an Indian Empire in the making. Hitherto, the Great Mogul, even in his degradation, was a word to conjure with. Had his nominal satrap who ruled Bengal respected the persons of British traders, the bubble might have been long in bursting. The Black Hole of Calcutta was avenged by Plassey (1757), which taught the lesson that Asiatics, led by Asiatics, were no match for European discipline. The prestige of superior might made a company of merchant adventurers the paramount power in India. Among the mother-ideas of Socialism was a spectacle of a band of traders governing an Empire.

Their early attempts to administer this rich and densely peopled domain were mere gropings in the dark. The white "Nabobs" were intent on wringing fortunes from the hopeless ryots, and their insolent wealth degraded the ideals of their countrymen at home. It is probable that India suffered more from the knavery and strength of European civilization than from the preceding anarchy. An exotic system of law was foisted on a people only too ready to profit by imported chicane. The ancient village organization was ruthlessly trampled on; landlordism in its worst

form was introduced into Bengal. With greater experience, the quality of our government improved; and the rulers of India began to grasp their duty towards subject races. Natives gained a footing in the lower grades of the official hierarchy; and English became the medium of higher instruction throughout the peninsula. The imposing edifice rested on insecure foundation. The centenary of Plassey was the signal for a revolt of our pampered native army, which shook the Empire to its foundations. Its suppression was a landmark in history. India passed under the control of the British Crown, or rather of the omnipotent Parliament. No public assembly could be less fitted for so gigantic a task. Ignorant, parochial, opportunist and rent by factions, the House of Commons has allowed its great dependency to be governed by a bureaucracy whose permanent officials have no personal knowledge of their charge. Their servants in the East are far better qualified to administer an Empire. They have the virtues and defects of an imperial race; and the edifice which has arisen in a brief half-century has genuine claims to the world's admiration. India enjoys peace within her borders, security from foreign aggression. The laws have been admirably codified. A network of 29,000 miles of railway, vast systems of irrigation, postal and telegraph services in advance of those of Europe, medical relief, some measure of Western education—such are the advantages which India has reaped from foreign rule. One thing alone is wanting, and that is the union of hearts. We are camping in the peninsula like our predecessors the Moguls. Miscegenation is impossible; for the handful of British would be overwhelmed in the mass, as were the Portuguese three centuries earlier. Efficient government is secured by a constant influx of the flower of Britain's youth. Conquering races are, *ipso facto*, deficient in imagination and sympathy. The British nature is positive, material, refractory to new impressions, and adverse to philosophic speculation. Moreover, national ideals have deteriorated since the Jubilee of 1887, which provoked an aristocratic reaction, and heightened the lust of dominion. The pseudo-imperialism thus generated received a setback from the Boer War; but commercialism and a thirst for material enjoyment have entered the nation's soul to the detriment of all its higher faculties. Anglo-Indians unwittingly outrage native sentiment by consuming forbidden food. "I love you, Sahib," said a

Sikh of high rank to his English friend; "but when I think that you are in the habit of devouring beef, my soul shrinks from yours!" Their interest in the languages and higher manifestations of Indian thought is very slight. Many have no other ambition than to spend as large a proportion of Indian service as possible in hill stations, and hasten back to the delights of golf and bridge. The British are not alone to blame for the widening gulf between rulers and ruled. The Indian nature is charitable, self-denying and prone to natural affection. The cultured classes are idealists, with a secret contempt for material civilization. But the fruit of ages of subjection is seen in their fatalism and lack of self-reliance. Owing to deficient moral balance, they often exhibit the most astounding contradictions. Religious and caste prejudices divide them into countless semi-hostile communities, and restrict social intercourse with Europeans. The saving clause in their complex character is a limitless capacity for admiration. An Englishman gifted with the nobler virtues is loved and obeyed with devotion. Herein, perhaps, lies the key to the problem of governing India.

It can hardly be said that the worthiest traits in Indian nature are elicited by education. The percentage of children attending school to the total population is only 1.9, as compared with 13 in England. Technical instruction has scarcely begun, and infinitesimal is the number of girls who receive any kind of training. Young men are taught to remember, rather than to think for themselves. No pains are taken to form character or inspire a sense of public duty. The output of our Colleges and High Schools is far in excess of the country's wants; and thousands of youths find that their dearly bought culture fails to give them bread. Their bitter disappointment finds vent in the press. The united circulation of India's seventeen hundred vernacular journals is insignificant from a Western point of view. But each copy is read to a little crowd of eager listeners after the daily work is done, and their hostile tone has permeated the masses. The Congress movement has had a similar effect. It commenced in 1885, as an aftermath of the racial friction generated by Lord Ripon's well-meant effort to equalize the legal status of Europeans and Indians. It is the wire-pullers' aim to destroy the monopoly of high office enjoyed by the ruling race and pave the way for democratic government. In its earlier stages the

agitation was conducted by constitutional methods, but they have given place to a campaign of slander and misrepresentation.

India's isolation is a thing of the past. She is penetrated by world-forces, amongst which are Socialism and its offshoot, Anarchism. In both, the cardinal doctrine is class warfare, culminating in a cataclysm which will sweep away the inequalities and injustices of society. It is more than a coincidence that Lajpat Rai, who has recently been deported for sedition, consorted last year with Anarchists in Paris and Brussels. Political agitators have borrowed the tactics described by Karl Marx and Bakunin. Moreover, the spirit of revolt has infected millions belonging to the lower castes. The jute traffic has poured a flood of wealth into Bengal, whose down-trodden masses chafe under Brahmin despotism and crave for a larger measure of social recognition. But the distribution of wealth is as defective as it is in Europe. An increasing percentage of the Indian population is always on the verge of famine. Railways have equalized the price of food, and maintained it at a far higher level than in the days of native rule. Foreign commerce is, indeed, advancing by leaps and bounds; but, from an Indian point of view, it does not conduce to the general well-being. The great bulk of its profits is spent in Europe, America and China. Exports consist mainly of raw materials; imports, of manufactured goods which might readily be produced by organized labor within the Empire. Indigenous industries have been killed by free trade, and those who pursued them have been relegated to an overburdened soil. Ninety per cent. of the population are agriculturists, most of whom are packed into the alluvial areas. Early marriage and large families are inculcated by religion. Thus the preventive checks enunciated by Malthus are at work on a gigantic scale. Warfare and famine are prevented by the British Government, but it is powerless against cholera and plague. The pressure of population on the soil is felt by all classes with increasing stringency; and they blame alien rulers for the consequences of their own disobedience to nature's laws.

Religion is an important factor in the existing ferment. The 207,000,000 Hindus are ruled with an iron rod by the Brahmins, who are strongly organized, and present common characteristics from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. Their dream is a restoration of the theocracies destroyed nine centuries ago, and it is

communicated to the devotees who flock by millions to places of pilgrimage. The rising at Manipur in 1891, which led to the slaughter of the Chief Commissioner of Assam, was planned at Kalighat, a temple of the Goddess of Destruction near Calcutta. The 5,000,000 religious mendicants who batten on Hindu charity and superstition are inveterate foes to the foreign rule. The ideals of Indian Mussulmans, numbering 62,000,000, have undergone a curious transformation. The upper class, descended from Mogul soldiers and statesmen, knew that time was when English merchants sued for the crumbs that fell from the Emperor's table. Their attitude towards us was one of aloofness, and they were inclined to resent the virtual monopoly of high office secured by the suppler and more subtle Hindus. About ninety years ago a reform movement set in among the population of Bengal, whose forebears had been forcibly converted by the Moguls. It was Puritanism of a militant type, and aimed at the extirpation of Christian rule. But in the last few years a change has taken place in the spirit of Islam throughout Asia. The example of Japan has proved that the West may be beaten with its own weapons, and cultured Mohammedans are assimilating the nobler side of European civilization while they reject its dross. The current agitation is essentially Hindu, and those who profess the rival cult are ranging themselves on the British side. Christians of all denominations number barely one per cent. of the population. Proselytes would come in more freely if Christian secretaries would lay aside their mutual jealousy; but the political influence of missionary effort is wholly good. The spectacle of self-devotion, self-denial and brotherly love afforded by devoted Europeans of all denominations is a powerful antidote to the profound materialism of our Government.

Such are the more salient features of the unrest which is permeating India. It is nothing else than the blind struggle of an embryonic national soul to find corporate existence. England has given her great dependency a *lingua franca* for the interchange of thought, means of communication which annihilate space and natural obstacles. For the first time in their history educated Indians are united by a common Government and common political ideals. They are in complete touch with the external world. If the example of Japan has fired the imagination of Indian patriots, the lessons taught by the passive resistance of

Nonconformists and the efforts of Englishwomen to secure political rights have not been lost. The Wish to Live of a nascent organism has been outraged by the partition of Bengal. However necessary some such measure may have been from an administrative point of view, it was far too drastic, and has robbed the ancient province of rich districts which were geographically and politically its own. Of the measures adopted by Indian wire-pullers it is hard to speak with equanimity. The boycott, by which they hoped to bring Great Britain to her knees, was evidently inspired by the direct pressure and general strike recognized by Anarchists, and is equally impossible of realization. For good or for evil, India has entered the comity of civilized nations, and is linked to it by countless ties. Her isolation would mean a reversion to the barbarism of the pre-Aryan period. Such senseless and wicked manœuvres will serve only to make compromise impossible. Nor can the policy of our Indian Government escape condemnation. It neglected the maxim "*Principiis obsta*," and allowed Bengal and the Punjab to drift into a state perilously resembling anarchy. Then it passed from timidity to the opposite extreme. Regulation III of 1818, which was raked up in order to spirit Lajpat Rai two thousand miles from his home, was framed in order to deal with the European adventurers let loose on India by the peace of 1815. When the Tsar of Russia adopts such measures, Englishmen can find no words to express their indignation. The prosecution of obscure native journals only increases their circulation. The prohibition of political meetings closes a channel by which popular discontent is brought to the knowledge of the ruling class. To grapple with external symptoms and neglect deep-seated causation is to lay up a store of racial hatred which will bear bitter fruit in the next decade.

Is the Indian problem, then, insoluble? A gleam of hope is afforded by the awakening of England's conscience. She is entering on a moral stage of national existence, and is becoming alive to the evils attending the unequal distribution of wealth, limitless competition, feudal privilege and *laissez faire*. Her broadening sympathy may, possibly, extend to the three hundred millions of Asiatics for whose welfare she is responsible in the sight of God. European civilization is not the last word; it has much to learn from Asia. From an evolutionary point of view, subject

racess are an impossibility. It is not in the nature of things that an Empire in another hemisphere should be eternally governed from a little group of islands set in northern seas. England's mission is to pave the way for a time when India shall take her place beside the great self-governing Colonies. Indians, too, should profit by the precious years of British peace. They are by no means strong enough to stand alone, and the withdrawal of 70,000 foreign bayonets would plunge them into anarchy and civil war. Social must precede political reform. When the bonds of caste are broken, when Brahmin tyranny is overthrown, when Indian women are emancipated, the process of nation-building will have really begun. Technical education is in its infancy; the empire's resources are poorly developed, and—except in Bombay—the agency has been European, not native, capital. Great Britain and India alike must take to heart the burning words of Ruskin, "That nation is wealthiest which contains the greatest number of noble and happy lives."

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